THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Supreme Court in its judgement dated 11.12.1996 has ordered that no shrimp ponds can be constructed or set up within the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) as defined in the Coastal Regulation Zone Notification, 1991 and that the shrimp culture ponds already set up in the Coastal Regulation Zone shall be demolished and removed before 31.3.1997. However, the Supreme Court's direction do not apply to the traditional and improved traditional types of technologies practised by the farming community in the coastal low lying areas. The Supreme Court also ordered that the Government shall constitute an authority under Section 3(3) of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 and shall confer on the said authority all the powers necessary to protect the ecologically fragile coastal areas, sea-shore, water front and other coastal areas and specially to deal with the situation created by the shrimp culture industries in the coastal States/UTs. The Supreme Court has further directed that shrimp culture ponds outside Coastal Regulation Zone area may be set up with the prior approval of such an Authority.

A petition has been filed in the Supreme Court seeking a review of their judgement. The matter is sub-judice.

Rajya Sabha has passed the Aquaculture Authority Bill, 1997 on the 20th March, 1997. The Bill seeks to, *inter alia*, regulate the activities connected with aquaculture in the coastal areas. When the Bill was to be taken up in the Lok Sabha, the fact that the Supreme Court had stayed operation of its judgement became known and, therefore, the bill was not moved in the Lok Sabha. The Court has stayed the operation of its judgement till the 30th July, 1997. The date of hearing on the review petition in the Supreme Court is today, i.e. 25th July, 1997. Further action will be taken after the Supreme Court has passed orders.

Backlog of cooking gas connections in Andhra Pradesh

*53. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a backlog of some 10.95 lakh applications for cooking gas connections in the State of Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, the break-up of such pending applications from different parts of the State;

(c) the specific plan that has been drawn up to clear this huge backlog; and

(d) how does the position of Andhra Pradesh compare with that of other States in the country?

(THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA): (a) The number of persons in the waiting list registered with the PSU Oil Companies in the State of Andhra Pradesh as on 30.6.1997 was about 11.27 lakhs.

(b) The District-wise break-up of PSU Oil Companies is given in Statement-I (*See below*)

(c) New LPG connections are released in a Phased manner thoughout the Country including the State of Andhra Pradesh depending upon the LPG availability, waiting list, slack available with the Distributors and their viability. The increasing popularity of LPG as domestic cooking gas and subsidised price have led to a very high demand which has resulted in the creation of large waiting list for new LPG connections. This exceeds LPG availability from indigenous production of LPG and possible imports, and therefore, new enrolment plans are drawn up on the basis of LPG availability on a year to year basis.

The PSU Oil Companies enrolled 23.4 lakhs new LPG customers during 1996-97. Government has approved enrolment target of 10 lakh each for the first (April June, 97) and second (July-Sept., 97) quarters of 1997-98.

However efforts are going on to clear the waiting list progessively, Special efforts are on the clear the waiting list in Hilly areas falling within the altitude 2000-4499 ft. and above 4500 ft. MSL and Taj Trapezium area to protect the environment. Further connections are being released progressively persons who have registered on the waiting list prior to 1.1.91. Efforts are on to clear the waiting list prior to 1.1.91 by 30.9.97. Government have introduced a scheme (Tatkal Scheme) to release LPG connections on demand.

Plans have been drawn to enrol additional new LPG customers in the future years in the country by augmenting LPG availability. The LPG availability from indigenous sources in expected to increase from 3.356 MMT in 1996-97 to 6.873 MMT by the year 2001-02. The above availability from indigenous sources is expected to accrue by commissioning of new sources and augmenting LPG production at some of the existing sources.

(d) The State-wise waiting list from new LPG connections with the PSU Companies distributors on 1.4.1997 is given in Statement-II.

Statement-I

District-wise waiting list for LPG connection in Andhra Pradesh.

District	No. of Waiting list
Anantpur	27706
Adilabad	38179
Guntur	65114
Hyderabad	243817
Kurnool	22037
Krishna	88116
Karimnagar	54277
Khammam	29101
Medak	10543
Mahbubnagar	14648
Nizambad	25021
Nalgonda	19179
Prakasam	20443
Rangareddy	48778
Warangal	38340
Nellore	39406
Cuddapah	18905
Chitoor	70420
Visakhapatnam	89859
Vizianagaram	17403
Srikakulam	17975
East Godavari	50534
West Godavari	74467
Bellampalli	850
Total:-	1127029

Statement-II

Statewise waiting list on 1.4.1997

States	(Figures in Lakhs)
Andhra Pradesh	11.41
Arunachal Pradesh	0.19
Assam	1.98
Bihar	4.27
Delhi	8.17
Goa	0.85
Gujarat	8.36
Haryaya	4.92
Himachal Pradesh	1.08
Jammu & Kashmir	1.24
Karnataka	7.54
Kerala	7.35
Madhya Pradesh	6.90
Maharashtra	18.33

States	(Figures in Lakhs)
Manipur	0.08
Meghalaya	0.08
Mizoram	0.08
Nagaland	0.06
Orissa	2.17
Punjab	7.42
Rajasthan	6.31
Sikkim	0.00
Tamilnadu	14.94
Tripura	0.37
Uttar Pradesh	15.05
West Bengal	11.20
Total	140.31
Union Territories	
Andaman & Nicobar	0.12
Chandigarh	0.86
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	0.02
Daman & Diu	0.05
Lakshadweep	0.01
Pondicherry	0.54
Total	1.59
All India.	141.90

Schemes to involve local bodies in cultural programmes

*54. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH 'SURYA'
SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government propose to involve local bodies—Panchayats and Nagar Palikas—in important cultural programmes of the Department;

(b) if so, the details thereof, scheme-wise; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI S.R. BOMMAI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A scheme has been formulated to establish Rural Libraries at Panchayat level. The scheme is to be implemented through the Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation in cooperation with the State Govts./Union Territories on a 75:25 matching basis. The scheme aims to provide assistance to Gram Panchayats including local government authority at Block level if there are no village Panchayats. The Centre's share of the grant is: for construction of library building an amount of Rs. 1 lakh and for purchase of books, furniture and equipment Rs. 50,000/-. to effectively run the library activities, the library will be administered at the Panchayat level by a Committee comprised of BDO/Panchayat Pradhan/ Sarpanch/Mukhiya in their ex-official capacity and such other representatives as the State Govt. may nominate.

To commemorate the 50th Anniversary of India's Independence, celebrations are being planned in a manner that will ensure participation by a maximum number of people, involving all sections of Society and at all levels such as towns, villages, Tehsils, district headquarters, State Capitals, factories, trading centres, schools, colleges, universities, local bodies and panchayti Raj institutions etc. The plan of action for this celebration is to be decided by State level Committees formed for the celebrations of 50th Anniversary of India's Independence. In this connection Union Minister of Human Resource Development has addressed a detailed communication on 2.6.97 to all Chief Ministers.

(c) Does not arise.

Areas likely to be hit by drought

*55. SHRI SURINDER KUMAR SINGLA:
DR. SHRIKANT RAM CHANDRA JICHKAR:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) what are the areas and regions in India which are lickly to be hit by drought this year;